

terms of insurance coverage. We had...the uninsured totalled less than 10 percent in our state, and I'll be passing out for you a chart that will show that...the latest figures show that we had the biggest, perhaps the biggest increase in uninsured in the country percentwise. We went from a little over...well, 10.5 percent to 13.7 percent a couple of years ago, which is the latest figures we have. So our problem which was once in very good shape is heading the wrong way and we've got to find a way to deal with the health care problem because again, if we can get people health insurance, if we can find a way to make it affordable to them, then they won't have the need to go onto welfare in the first place and again, we have legislation from Senator Day, we have legislation from Senator Beutler, Senator Dierks has got legislation, I've got some legislation on pooling and coverages, we don't know what the solution is at this point and nobody is saying that we can cover everybody and get everybody health insurance, but that's the goal that I think we need to work toward and the closer we get to it, the less we'll need welfare. And that's the reason it's included and we can't let it fall off of the issue. We need to keep it involved in the issue and I'd give the rest of my time back to Senator Beutler.

SENATOR CROSBY: Senator Beutler.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Senator Crosby, I believe I'll just switch and take Senator Wesely's time when it comes up. Thank you.

SENATOR CROSBY: Thank you. Senator Chambers, your light is next on the Witek amendment.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Madam President and members of the Legislature, we all know that if anybody has the money to pay the cost of anything which is for sale in this state or in this country, you can say that item is available. If you make the word have a realistic meaning and application, then to modify that term available by the word "affordable", as is done in this amendment, you come to grips with what it is that we, as a Legislature, are dealing with when we establish a policy with regard to this. I've even heard Senator Witek talk on occasion about the difficulty of affording various things that are needed. So in the same way that if we were to say that the doors of the courthouse are to be opened to everybody, including poor people, but you must have an attorney and if you cannot afford the attorney then you can't get into court but we still